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Pat Sloan
Wind of Change Blows Again

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Import Controls

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The EEC—One Year On

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Survey—May 12, 1976

WIND OF CHANGE BLOWS AGAIN

'The most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago is of the strength of this African national consciousness. . . . The wind of change is blowing through the continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact.'

Rt Hon HAROLD MACMILLAN MP, Cape Town, February 3, 1960.

'The whole African continent is in revolt. All the imperialist powers with colonies there are being forced to make big political concessions to the rising liberation movements. Where is it all going to end? Will it be possible to stop at constitutional changes which provide only for a measure of political independence? Or will the liberation struggle advance to the point of ending *all* forms of imperialist domination? Worse still, will complete liberation take these countries into the "Communist Camp"? This is the dilemma which confronts, not only British imperialism, but all the imperialist powers.'

IDRIS COX, *Labour Monthly*, March 1960.

'Dr Kissinger has committed the United States to outright support for Rhodesian majority rule. . . .
'In probably the most important statement of policy on Africa ever made by an American leader . . . Dr Kissinger called for common action to achieve "the great goals of national independence, economic development and racial justice".'

Times, April 25, 1976.

'I would suggest that if the UK government and Dr Kissinger had not taken the line they have taken, we would have undermined every moderate black leader in the entire continent of Africa.'

Rt Hon ANTHONY CROSLAND MP, April 28, 1976.

The close similarity between Dr Kissinger's statement in Lusaka on April 24 and Harold Macmillan's statement in Cape Town of sixteen years earlier cannot be overlooked. For both statements came as a result of the victorious struggle of the Africans against imperialism, and the imperialist powers' inability to contain it. As the *Sunday Times* aptly put it on May 2:

> Kissinger underwrites the cause of black nationalism, to ensure that that nationalism does not turn to Moscow, Cuba or elsewhere. He is certainly not

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> to be blamed for this . . . it is difficult to know what other speech Kissinger could have made at this moment.

Sixteen years ago things were slightly different. Harold Macmillan in fact first made his 'winds of change' speech in Accra, which he visited before going to Cape Town. Here, too, he was faced with a successful struggle for independence. His comment was not at the time considered newsworthy, probably because the press regarded such a comment as inevitable, for 'what other speech' could he 'have made at this moment'? But when he went on to Cape Town, and there repeated the remark, it became news. For in South Africa, then as now, the 'wind of change' had not yet had effect. So again today, Kissinger's statement 'has left South Africa desperately worried about the future' for 'it will focus world attention on Ian Smith's lifeline' (*Sunday Times*, May 2, 1976).

Macmillan spoke sixteen years ago with the independence of Ghana very much in mind. Kissinger today is influenced by the victory of Angola. It has become clearer than ever that the open backing of reaction in the old way just will not work, hence a 'new look' has to be given to American and British policy.

Just as, sixteen years ago, Macmillan still expressed nostalgic respect for white rule in South Africa ('You are sprung from Europe, the home of nationalism. And here in Africa you have yourselves created a full nation—a new nation'), so too today, while Kissinger pledges his nominal support for the forces of liberation, it is clear, as a *Times* leader (April 28) headlines, that what is meant is 'All Aid Short of War', a phrase used after President Nyerere has already declared that 'the war against Rhodesia has begun.' According to the *Times*, 'black militants will no doubt reserve their gratitude for Cuba and Russia' but 'thoughtful African leaders should have every reason for private satisfaction.' It is obvious that even Mr Smith in Rhodesia is trying at the eleventh hour to win over such 'thoughtful' (or 'moderate') leaders by incorporating them in his cabinet. But this, says the *Times*, will fall flat. And an existing black Rhodesian MP, Mr R. Sadomba, has already dismissed Mr Smith's latest gesture as 'an outright insult' which 'will make the country's six million Africans more determined than ever to reach their political goal' (*Daily Telegraph*, May 4, 1976).

It should not be overlooked that Kissinger's overtures to Africa have been coupled in Europe with a whole series of dire warnings against the advance of communism in Italy, France and Portugal. On April 7 the *New York Times* quoted Kissinger as saying:

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> Our discomfort is at having to conduct foreign policy by relative means rather than by unilateral declarations. The fact is that, with the Soviet Union as an emerging super-power, we are doomed to coexistence. Thus to sum up, detente is not an amelioration of tone. Detente is the improvement of long-term relations with an emerging super-power, and that is a problem which will confront any American president no matter who he is.
>
> (*Times*, April 8, 1976)

Cuba has also been warned that retaliation is just round the corner if any further action is taken such as the aid to Angola.

Cuban Comment

To these threats Prime Minister Fidel Castro replied last year at the first Cuban Communist Party Congress:

> What kind of people do they think we are? What country do they think they are dealing with? The old Cuba? No! This is the new Cuba and this is a different country!

Castro went on to state that 'in all our revolutionary process we have always followed a policy of solidarity with the African revolutionary movement.' He named Algeria, Guinea-Bissau and Syria as all countries in whose liberation the Cubans had participated. 'Many of the Angolan cadres studied in Cuba. . . .'

But 'the US government, absolutely devoid of all scruples, launched the South African regular troops against Angola. . . . They had not counted on international solidarity.'

Lenin in 1916

It was in 1916 that Lenin's *Imperialism* was published, and already at that time the qualitative change was noted that was taking place in capitalism. 'Fifty years ago, when Marx was writing *Capital*, free competition appeared to most economists as a "natural law". . . . Today, monopoly has become a fact.' And among the features of this new phase of capitalism, which may be termed 'imperialism', was 'the formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world amongst themselves.' Thus 'the territorial division of the whole world among the great capitalist powers is completed,' said Lenin. It took yet another fifty years for this world domination by the great monopolies to become widely recognised and for the term 'multi-nationals' to be coined to describe these great international giants whose origin Lenin had drawn attention to.

At this point one important comment should be made. In the old days of competitive capitalism the term 'monopoly' was strictly

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interpreted as meaning *one* company (or group of companies) being the only supplier in a market. This definition, as we know today, is much too narrow. Our own Monopolies Commission, ineffective though it is, defines monopoly as arising when one firm controls one-third of a market. In fact, it is still broader than this: in any market, at any time, if any one seller or group of sellers can fix a price without fear of being undercut by competitors, then monopoly power is at work.

A second feature of modern big business is diversification: a single company may not only produce a large variety of products, but it may retain the original brand names of such products so that nobody can know, without specialised knowledge, that it is a product of such a monopoly at all.

Modern Monopoly

The modern multinational company not only trades in a vast variety of products, but also in a vast variety of markets in a large number of different countries. In such circumstances it is impossible to say that such companies, *all* of the time, in *all* their markets, are monopolies. For they have constantly to face competitive challenges as and where they arise. But in the main, with the resources at their disposal and the variety of goods in which they deal, for most of the time in most of their markets they hold privileged positions where, through advertising and other means (including commercial bribery), they can retain or increase their sales without reducing prices. This has gone so far in this country now that Denis Healey himself has decreed that 20 per cent of reinvested profits may be charged up as an 'investment cost' to prices. This means that we all have to pay prices to cover 'cost of production' and 'normal profit,' plus 20 per cent extra towards further investment. In this way inflationary price rises are now 'built into' the system, entirely to the benefit of monopoly big business and the multinationals.

It should be noted that, 20 per cent having been granted, big business is by no means satisfied. The *Economist* (May 8) urges the chancellor now to 'broaden the list of costs that can be set against prices (why not everything?),' and asks him to 'allow a much greater proportion of investment spending to be set against prices' and 'persuade the TUC to make it clear that the price code really will go next year.'

The monopolies are insatiable. Having been allowed to add to so-called 'costs' 20 per cent of new investment, they are now asking for more. What is to stop this continuing till 100 per cent of all reinvested

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profit is added to costs. The consumer will then pay not only for costs of past production but for costs of future production as well!

Some may remember how, a few years ago, when the Ministry of Health had serious claims against Roche International for over-charging on medical supplies, the Swiss-based multinational calmly replied that it needed to overcharge in this way to cover 'research and development', in other words a new capital outlay, which Healey now calls an 'investment cost' to be borne to the extent of 20 per cent by the consumer.

At last, after four years, 'Roche Products, the UK subsidiary of the Swiss-based Hoffman-La Roche drugs group, has reached agreement with the Inland Revenue' to pay up 'to £1.85 million to the tax authorities' (*Financial Times*, April 2, 1976). If ever there was an argument for nationalising drug manufacture, this is it, but the Labour Party has shelved the topic for further discussion!

In independent Ghana, in the days of Kwame Nkrumah, the President declared that his country would oppose 'neo-colonialism', for, as he said in his book of that name, 'a state in the grip of neo-colonialism is not master of its own destiny' (*Neo-colonialism*, p x). Such a state, he said, 'is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty,' but 'in reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside' (ibid, p ix).

In *Neo-colonialism* an exhaustive survey is made of the impact of the most powerful multinationals on Africa. The gold mining, diamond mining, tin, aluminium and nickel giants, and the monetary intervention by the world's biggest banks are all exposed. And the clear link between African interests and US, British, Belgian, Canadian and other sources of capital, and their intimate inter-connections, are brought to light. In India work has been done on the operation of multinationals there, and in Canada evidence has been presented to the Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration which has shown the monopolisation of nickel and copper, the domination of three electrical firms, and the huge giants handling oil.

In Europe the EEC has only this month admitted bankruptcy in trying to handle the scandalous misuse of funds by the oil companies in Italy where large payments to political parties have been declared by the 'competition commissioner' to be beyond the scope of EEC intervention.

No wonder that a renewed 'campaign against Britain's membership of the EEC has been launched by more than 100 local and national groups' (*Times*, April 24, 1976), and while Hilary Benn in this issue

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does not go as far as this he warns clearly enough against the many dangers of staying in.

There is still nothing under British law to prevent any company registered in Britain from subsidising a political party. The multinationals, naturally enough, pay those politicians who defend the 'freedom' of the multinationals. So that with currency speculation, political subsidies, and 'investment strikes' the multinationals may at any time hold up any government to ransom until it toes the line with an approved 'moderate' or 'sensible' policy. The *Economist* of September 1, 1973, referred to the multinationals, specifically referring to the allegations made about ITT in Chile:

> Resentment at multinationals is never far below the surface because a multinational has options open to it that a home-based company does not. No single government can push it around like a domestic corporation. Multinationals are also big. In 1971, each of the top ten had added-value . . . of over $3 billion—which is more than the GNP of at least 80 countries. Production of all the foreign subsidiaries of multinationals came to $330 billion, or slightly more than the exports of the non-communist world. The multinationals' activities in the developing countries account for one-third of the world stock of direct foreign investment.
>
> As developing countries have only one-sixth of the world's GNP and one-fifth of its exports, they feel the impact of the multinationals keenly.

And when Kissinger proposes to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) yet one more international bank, which like the IMF is sure to be US-dominated, the monopoly grip of the financial arm of the multinationals is likely to be strengthened again.

In Ghana one of the British-based multinationals is Unilever. It operates in Ghana under five distinct trade names: Lever Bros (Ghana), Juapong Textiles, GB Olivant (Ghana), the Ghana Consolidated Machinery and Trading Co, and the two large department stores in Accra, the capital, Kingsway Stores and the United Africa Co (UAC). How many Ghanaians realise their two main 'competing' department stores are in fact two arms of the same multinational octopus?

And while the underdeveloped countries have this problem to contend with, we in Britain are in no different a position. How many of our own British consumers are aware, for example, that 'branded' products such as bear the Batchelors' label, or Birds Eye, or Cash & Carry, or Mac Fisheries, or Lipton, or Walls (whether ice-cream or sausages), or even John West are all offshoots of the same multinational, Unilever, which reaps the profit from all these 'competing' companies?

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Another multinational, ICI, has just received government permission to raise dividends by far more than the limit set on wage increases, and there is not even the proviso that new investment must be made in Britain.

In the days of Marx monopolies were few, and mainly benefited one group of capitalists at the expense of another. Nowadays the multinationals cover the world with their networks, and consumers' goods are as much supplied by them as producers' goods. Hence when Marx (as edited by Engels) wrote in Vol III of *Capital* that 'if a commodity with a monopoly price should enter into the necessary consumption of the labourer' it might then 'depress wages below the value of labour power' (Kerr edition, p 1003), he was writing of a situation which has now become more or less universal. Hence the general tendency for real labour values to fall, yet for prices to rise, is an essential feature of modern inflation.

Multinationals in Britain

When, in the *Economist* of April 3, Stuart Holland stated that Britain is now 'five times more multinational than its major competitors' and that 'big business domination is now . . . a producer sovereignty of administered pricing and joint-monopoly markets,' he was stating bare facts which cannot be denied.

But side-effects of these bare facts are that multinationals, whether British-based or not, can deposit their ready funds in any bank throughout the world; and in any case of local 'lack of confidence' they can shift these funds elsewhere, making the lack of confidence worse. Denis Healey has fallen for this, and the 'defence of sterling' against such manoeuvres takes the form of persuading the General Council of the TUC to accept cuts in real wages.

Unfortunately, on the TUC General Council, a realisation of the big business manoeuvres is not yet fully understood. Otherwise how could it happen that on May 1, in *Tribune*, Jack Jones listed the exact type of proposal that the left in the labour movement is demanding: import controls, selective reflationary measures, strengthening the price code, retention of food subsidies, a wealth tax, more money for the National Enterprise Board, increases in social security and pension payments, and help for the unemployed in job creation. The only important point he did not mention was a cut in arms expenditure. Yet, after all this, within ten days of his statement being published, the General Council had reached 'agreement' with the government of such a kind that the *Economist* (May 8, 1976) could describe them as 'coming away almost empty handed on import

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controls, unemployment, prices and industrial strategy.' Commenting on the resulting atmosphere the *Economist* describes David Basnett (National Union of General and Municipal Workers) as feeling 'naked in the face of militant shop stewards who next winter will be encouraging workers to go for more than 5 per cent.'

The multinationals and the monopolies have so far won. On a world scale too, they will win wherever Macmillan's and Kissinger's 'winds of change' are limited to political 'independence' without accompanying this with the disfranchisement of the multinationals.

To some, such a task is impossible. Yet as is shown in the article in this issue on the Caribbean, Jamaica and Guyana have both taken firm steps against multinationals in the recent period. Cuba shines out like a light in the western hemisphere as standing up to the attempts at state intervention by the US and against the multinationals. Portugal after liberation from fascism took drastic steps against arms of the multinational octopus on its soil. The entire socialist world is a world where the economy is planned in the long-term interests of the peoples.

If the new winds in Africa are to become really effective, then the question of Idris Cox in our issue of March 1960 can be answered in only one way: '*all* forms of imperialist domination' must be ended. And for this to happen, it must also happen here, where multinational dominance remains still immune against serious government intervention.

P.S.

LABOUR MONTHLY FIFTY YEARS AGO

During the latter part of the General Strike and in the days that followed, many hundreds of the working class were laid by the heels. In case after case these men have gone to prison for performing their ordinary trade union duty of peaceful picketing—a duty which under the Emergency Powers Act had suddenly become extremely hazardous.

In other cases men were sent to gaol for doing nothing, literally nothing. They came upon a crowd. In the usual way, curiosity impelled them to 'go over and see what is up'. They find themselves suddenly caught in a baton charge. Arrest, trial and sentence followed.

(From 'The Police Persecutions: A Document of the General Strike', *Labour Monthly*, June 1926)

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IMPORT CONTROLS

Max Madden MP

THERE is a growing acceptance that a resolution of Britain's grave economic ills calls for an economic miracle. The references for such an assertion are impeccable. The *Fourth Report from the Expenditure Committee*, prepared by its General Sub-Committee after examining the government's White Paper, said on March 25: 'We wish to point out that the achievement of the government's objectives . . . presupposes a substantial improvement in the performance of the economy—indeed, by UK standards, almost an economic miracle.' Having delivered this upper-cut, the illustrious Committee members went for a knock-out with eagerness:

> For example, to reduce unemployment to 700,000 in 1979 would require an increase in manufacturing output of 8½ per cent per annum from 1976 to 1979 . . . as for private fixed investment the Treasury's required growth rate of 5 per cent per annum between 1974 and 1979 implies a growth rate of about 10½ per cent per annum between 1976 and 1979 which is higher than any rate reached for a three year period in the last 20 years. Similarly the required annual increase in exports is, according to the Treasury, 7½ to 8 per cent from 1974 to 1979 which must mean well over 10 per cent from 1976 to 1979. This compares with a rate of 8½ per cent achieved in the exceptionally favourable years of 1967-70.

All this was dragged from the lips of reluctant Treasury officials at several Committee sessions. By the time the hapless Chief Secretary to the Treasury entered the ring it was not long before he was struggling on the ropes. When it was pointed out that Britain's economic performance would have to be dramatically transformed if government targets were to be met, he said that if one based one's views upon the past:

> you are giving up all hope. In the last 30 years the British economy has performed very badly. If . . . [it is assumed that] . . . we will continue to perform just as badly in the future . . . [that] . . . may be right, but I am not prepared to start from that assumption; I am prepared to start from the assumption that the measures we have taken will enable us to achieve our objectives.

He added: 'All economists, forecasters and people making assumptions about the future are as likely to be right or wrong as we are . . . we are prepared to look with scepticism at everybody's forecasts.' The Committee concluded acidly: 'We do not think that we need to comment further.'

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Others are similarly sceptical. There is widespread opposition to a policy based on the assertion that all must be sacrificed in the doubtful cause of persuading investment in private manufacturing industry and the preposterous notion that wages are the sole cause of inflation. However, in a carefully orchestrated campaign embracing a wide spectrum of 'opinion formers', broad support for the wage-tax 'package' has emerged. Major emphasis has been placed on the effect of incomes policy in reducing inflation, the inexorable effect on prices from increased raw material and commodity prices (which will flow from any up-turn in international trade) is studiously ignored. So, too, has been the crucial question of how increased manufacturing investment can be secured without any controls or powers over the direction of such investment. Jim Callaghan inadvertently revealed the weakness of persuasion when he admitted that a horse could be led to water but could not be forced to drink.

In summary, therefore, current government economic and industrial policy rests on an improvement in international trade, public expenditure being sacrificed for private investment, workers sacrificing a large chunk of their living standards, substantial borrowing—and an enormous dollop of hope! Wynn Godley of the Cambridge Economic Group, writing in the *Times* (March 28), spelt out the stark realities of such a policy:

> Not only is unemployment in 1980 likely to be higher, and real take-home pay (for those who still have jobs) lower than today; but also given existing arrangements for managing the economy there is no prospect of recovery in the shorter term . . . as there is no reason to suppose that underlying trends in international trade will improve, existing arrangements are likely to produce a chronic, deteriorating recession, probably combined with two digit inflation. . . . Prosperity can be achieved only by changing these arrangements.

A broad section of the labour movement, including trade unionists, MPs and economists have been articulating and developing an alternative to the 'existing arrangements' for two years. Their alternative demands controlled reflation, increased and sustained investment in manufacturing industry (with real planning and accountability), controls on overseas investment, utilising the full potential of oil—and import controls!

While import controls are not seen, and never have been, as a panacea for all our economic ills, they are seen by those who are demanding an alternative economic and industrial strategy as being central to the impact of that strategy. It is certainly the issue which the government, the Treasury and the establishment have steadfastly

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refused to discuss in any sensible fashion, and one which some sections of the left have sought to dismiss with utterly bogus arguments.

Those of us who support import controls argue that socialists, who support planning, should not forsake that belief when it comes to trade. We can see no valid objection to planning external trade as an integral aspect of extending planning into all other economic and industrial activity. We believe that the only way of securing some stability, certainly of avoiding the disastrous consequences (not least on working people) of perpetual foreign exchange market nerves, is to create more certainty through developing import controls over a period of years. The argument that this unilateral action by Britain would harm other countries must be refuted. It must be remembered that import controls would operate in the context of sustained economic growth and would, therefore, represent a major reduction in the annual growth of the import bill.

As socialists, aware of the urgent need to take full account of the problems of the third world, import controls would be negotiated most carefully. Such arrangements could well lead to such countries securing better arrangements with Britain than hitherto. It could also lead to other countries considering a planned and co-ordinated approach to international trade, rather than the selfish attitudes of the market place. Then there is the weakest argument of all: import controls would spark off retaliation! Apart from the points I have already made that a move toward planning trade could well have the effect of encouraging co-operation, surely it is difficult for countries to retaliate against Britain when many of them have enjoyed a surplus trade account with us for years. Just what do we export to Japan? And if the experience of other countries who have introduced import controls is any guide, exporters take the view that a reduced market is better than no market at all.

We foresee the introduction of a system of licences, with imports held at their present level for a year unless particular industries make out a case for special consideration. The year after, coinciding with the improvement in world trade, there would be restrictions on the import of cars, textiles and consumer durables—but almost certainly an increase in the imports of investment goods. The licensing system could then be operated flexibly to ensure sustained economic growth.

Another argument posed against import controls is that such protection is to feather-bed private enterprise. Again, is it not better to introduce import controls, which could lead to a dramatic change

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in Britain's domestic and international position, than to continue to lavish astronomic amounts of money on private enterprise indiscriminately? (The Treasury admits handing out £7,600 million in tax concessions in the last two years!)

If import controls of the sort outlined were introduced, there is little doubt that private and public investment would increase. Conditions calling for an extension of public ownership, and greater activity by the National Enterprise Board in manufacturing industry, would arise. Life would be injected into planning agreements by ensuring that investment took place on a priority basis, linking investment to import restrictions and price control. Genuine price controls would be of paramount importance.

But the most important consideration of all would be the effect on employment. Here, we must not overlook that between now and 1980 some 600,000 extra people are expected to come on to the labour market, adding to the employment problems which already exist. However the Treasury juggle with unemployment figures it is abundantly clear that there is no way of bringing unemployment down to even 700,000 by 1979 under existing policies. And many believe this target is totally unattainable.

It is time for a real change of course; and the time for that change of direction is rapidly running out. No one is pretending that alternative policies, including import controls, offer any instant remedies. What is certain, however, is that orthodox economic policies, dusted down and worked up by the PR men, hold very little hope, especially for working men and women and those unfortunate enough to have no job at all.

TARGET FOR TUC

George Bolton*

AT the Scottish TUC this year, in the debate on the budget, the emergency resolution submitted by the General Council and seconded by the miners regretted the Chancellor's failure to reflate the economy and mount an attack on the present unacceptable level of unemployment. It stated that the improvements in pensions and payments to the low paid are inadequate, that they should be increased and implemented immediately in order to raise the purchasing power of the people. It criticised the Chancellor for not bringing in

* George Bolton is the National Union of Mineworkers' Delegate at the Bogside Pit in Scotland.

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import controls on a selective basis, hand in hand with the easing of hire purchase restrictions.

It expressed serious concern over the proposition of tax concessions in lieu of wage restraint: the STUC has never favoured a government-imposed incomes policy, and compared it with the promises made to get acceptance of the 'Social Contract Mark I'. Those promises were consigned to the dustbin as soon as the workers accepted the £6.

This and other resolutions passed by the STUC and the Welsh TUC are extremely important. Instead of Len Murray trying to denigrate the importance of the Scots and Welsh TUCs, he should be taking serious note of their decisions. Instead of talking about the Social Contract Mark II, the TUC should be demanding the immediate implementation of the government's conveniently forgotten promises.

What about the promise of no cuts in the social services? What about the attack on unemployment? What about cutting VAT? What about the reflation of the economy?

In their arrogance and contempt they do not even really bother to make any promises in return for the acceptance of 'son of the social contract', other than the promise that it will lower living standards. The new deal is a raw deal and we must reject it. It indicates quite clearly the correctness of the argument advanced by the left that the acceptance of the Mark I version would inevitably lead to a tougher Mark II. Unless we fight back the process will continue, and the ruling class will achieve its aim of making us cheap labour as part of the solution to their problems.

As far as the miners are concerned the package would mean, in terms of equivalent weekly take-home pay, an increase on average of some £1.60, which we would not receive until March 1977, and it has to last until March 1978. The miners did not engage in mass struggles against a Tory government, winning improved wages and conditions and eventually defeating that government, only to have those gains taken from us by a Labour government. The miners are already beginning to get angry. We realise that our living standards are already in decline, and Healey admits that the new policy will mean a further decline.

By contrast ICI's first quarter profits for 1976 were £115 million, 60 per cent up on last year. Almost half ICI's investments are abroad: so much for their patriotism, their contribution to the spirit of Dunkirk. When one looks at the big fat cats, the major oil companies, the mind boggles at the profits involved. They are getting away with murder.

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The position of certain trade union leaders in this situation is absolutely untenable. They are actively participating in reducing the living standards of their members, acting almost as if they were policemen protecting the employers' interests against those of their members. Their attitude might have some credibility if the money saved in wages went to the government, but it does not. Money saved on wages goes right into the pockets of the employers, adding to their profit margins. But lower wages mean lower purchasing power, less demand for goods and inevitably more unemployment. Shades of 1926 and the years thereafter. The fact is that Mark I and Mark II assist in the process of lowering our living standards and can only be described as a downright swindle.

The next step will have to be a massive lobby of the special TUC on June 16. This will be vitally important in order to break out of the wages straightjacket, and a crucial point in the struggle to force the Labour government to adopt alternative policies, not in order to defeat it but rather to avoid the eventual certainty of its defeat if it continues its present right-wing policies.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

John Sprack*

THE past few months have been historic ones for the cause of freedom in southern Africa. Nail after nail has been hammered into the coffin of white supremacy in the subcontinent, and it has been increasingly clear, to those who needed convincing, that the liberation of southern Africa is an idea whose time has come.

Nothing seems to bring this home to the Smith regime, however. They destroyed the last chance they will probably get to negotiate a settlement, by sticking rigidly to a totally unacceptable time-table for majority rule. According to their own calculations, the 'terms' which they offered to the African nationalists meant that it would be ten years before there would be more African than white voters. According to the Africans, it might well be much longer, and in any event the right of the people to universal franchise could not be bargained away.

Shortly after negotiations broke down, President Samora Machel of Mozambique, in an important move of solidarity with the liberation movement of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), closed the Mozambique-

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Rhodesia border. He announced a total ban on any communication with the white Rhodesians, and the full implementation of sanctions. His reasons, which received little prominence in the Western media, included a series of attacks which Rhodesian forces had made upon villages on the Mozambique side of the border, including an aircraft attack on the village of Pafuri. The announcement highlighted the fact that white supremacy in southern Africa is a threat not only to the people within its own borders, but to the independence of neighbouring black Africa.

Weeks after the closure of the Mozambique border, the Zimbabwe liberation movement struck a dramatic blow in the south-east of the country. There were in fact two attacks which took place almost simultaneously. In the first one, at Nuanetsi on the Fort Victoria-Beit Bridge road, three South African motor cyclists were shot when they interrupted a group of freedom fighters involved in a raid. In the second, a Rhodesia Railways goods train detonated a mine on the Rutenga railway, which is Rhodesia's only direct and reliable rail link with South Africa. The regime was forced to close the routes for some time, and to institute a system of convoys thereafter for the protection of traffic.

These incidents were significant in several respects. Firstly, a statement issued in Lusaka stated that the operation had been carried out by 'cadres under the joint command of the former ZANU and ZAPU', implying a considerable measure of unity in the liberation movement in its military operations. Secondly, the incidents took place in an area which had previously been regarded by the regime as immune from attack. The situation is approaching where every part of Rhodesia can be regarded as an 'operational area'.

These events also focused attention upon the links between Rhodesia and South Africa. The Rutenga rail link, after all, had been built to enable the regime to carry on some sort of trade with the outside world through South Africa. Since UDI, South Africa has become increasingly responsible for Rhodesia's economic, as well as political, survival. She has been responsible for Rhodesia's trade, either on her own account, or acting as a middleman for some sanctions-busting third party. With the closure of the border with Mozambique, through which about 20 per cent of Rhodesia's trade used to be conducted, this role has become accentuated.

South African traders, of course, exact a high price for acting as middlemen. And this is not the only profit which they reap from the continued existence of the settler regime in Salisbury. The

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amount of South African investment in the Rhodesian economy has grown rapidly from the £100 million at which it stood at the time of UDI. Exactly how much is impossible to tell, because of the regime's security restrictions on any release of economic information. But it appears that South African capital is now dominant in tobacco, beverages, chemicals, mining (apart from gold), food manufacture, paper and publishing, and possibly in the fields of distribution and tourism (the latter industry is rapidly dwindling).

This economic interest, accompanied by strategic considerations, accounts for the military role which the Pretoria regime continues to play in Rhodesia. Under the Lusaka Manifesto of December 1974, South Africa undertook to withdraw its troops from Rhodesia, and claims to have honoured this commitment. But a series of eye-witness accounts, and reports of South African security forces killed in action, indicate that nothing of the sort has happened.

Quite apart from the presence of South African troops in Rhodesia, there is the role which Vorster and company play as armourers to the Smith regime. It is a simple point of logic that Rhodesian weapons and equipment would have become obsolete long ago, had it not been for this source of supply. On occasion, such arms deals have come out into the open: the most notorious case was the Jordanian deal in 1974, under which Jordan sold British planes, Tigercat missile systems, and Centurion tanks to Rhodesia, using a South African company as a go-between. The former British mercenary, Tom McCarthy, who served with the Rhodesian security forces, and has exposed some of the atrocities which they are committing, has also revealed details of arms transactions. In November 1975, he says, South African crews and technicians were sent up to Salisbury with four squadrons of Mirage planes.

It is in the light of the aid given by South Africa to Rhodesia, and the aggressive posture which these partners-in-crime adopt towards the rest of Africa, that British collaboration with the white regimes must be considered. Recent information brought to light by the Anti-Apartheid Movement shows that the UN embargo prohibiting the sale of arms to South Africa is being breached. The case which has perhaps received most publicity recently is that of the Marconi Troposcatter communications system for Namibia, which is aimed to form part of a weapons system in the war against the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). Another well-publicised case is that of Hasler (UK) of Croydon being involved in providing Hasler (SA) with a message switching unit. Bob Hughes MP has indicated to the Prime Minister that he has good reason to

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believe that the unit is ultimately destined for Rhodesia.

In this, as in so many other respects, British imperialism bears a heavy burden of guilt for the continued survival of apartheid and white supremacy in southern Africa. As the struggle intensifies over the coming months, moreover, the media in this country are likely to become increasingly vociferous in their efforts to whip up a tidal wave of sympathy for 'Britain's kith and kin'. The labour movement here will need to step up its campaign of solidarity with the people of southern Africa. It will need to be vigilant in opposing collaboration with the white regimes, particularly in fields such as the maintenance of the arms embargo and the prevention of mercenary recruitment. Such actions of solidarity are not only right in themselves. The peoples of southern Africa are poised to deal another body-blow to imperialism. Their victory will be of benefit not only to themselves, but to the peoples of the world as a whole.

THE EEC—ONE YEAR ON

Hilary Benn*

IT is hard to believe that a year has passed since the Common Market referendum last June. The issue of membership is no longer a live one, but its implications are there to see for those who care to look at them. One suspects, however, that this is one anniversary which will not receive much attention in the media because it is clear that the realities of Community membership today bear very little resemblance to the promises of last June.

It was only a year ago that posters promising 'Jobs for the Boys' were urging us to vote Yes. Today, with over five million unemployed throughout the whole Community, this appears to have been an inappropriate, if not misleading, slogan. None of the member states has avoided deep economic recession, and, although the EEC is not solely to blame, membership has certainly aggravated the recession in the UK. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than our balance of trade position, and in particular our trade in manufactured goods.

Despite all the predictions that free trade with the EEC states would have a beneficial effect on our export industries, the fact is that our deficit on trade in manufactured goods with the original six EEC states has grown steadily over the last four years and now stands at just under £1,000 million a year. This contrasts markedly with a healthy surplus with the rest of the world, and the net result is

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that we are importing vast quantities of goods that could, and should, be produced at home. As a direct result of this deficit there has been a substantial net loss of potential jobs in the UK.

Living standards continue to be reduced by the Common Agricultural Policy, which this year will spend at least £2.2 million on keeping food prices artificially high. And now the whole mechanism has been thrown into disarray by the recent currency crises, with the result that the UK and Italy are being urged to devalue their 'green currencies' (used for CAP transactions)—a move which would raise food prices still further.

These are just two examples of the reality of membership of the Community, the benefits of which are so hard to discern. This lack of obvious advantages is symptomatic of the Community's decay which has reached such a state that its whole future is in doubt. The last summit meeting failed to reach agreement on anything; the CAP is a financial and administrative nightmare; the ideals of the founding fathers have fallen by the wayside; and the Community means little to its citizens. It has failed to deliver the promised goods of economic success, and its realisation of this failure forces it into an ever more desperate search for large-scale, federalist solutions.

The Community faces a stark choice: it must either unite further or run the risk of total collapse. The integrationists, not surprisingly, believe that the answer lies in greater centralisation of power. Their response to the economic crisis which now affects all member states is to call for more control over economic policy by the Community's institutions, and greater adherence to the principles of the Treaty of Rome—the Ten Commandments of the market economy. But to what extent is the Treaty's commitment to market forces and free competition relevant to the problems we face in 1976?

One of the main reasons why the labour movement has opposed membership has been precisely because it does not believe that the real solutions to the problems of unemployment and industrial stagnation are to be found in the Treaty of Rome. The Labour Party *Manifesto* of February 1974 made that perfectly clear, and yet we now find the government using its Community obligations as part of the excuse for refusing to implement these *Manifesto* policies. The principles embodied in the Treaty of Rome have helped to sow the seeds of our present industrial and economic problems, and at the same time these principles prevent the Community from offering any socialist or socially acceptable solutions. They are an irrelevancy to the needs of the UK economy, and yet, paradoxically, they are an irrelevancy that cannot be ignored.

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There is a very real danger that a federal super-state will be created in a desperate attempt to rekindle the ashes of 'European' unity. Direct elections to the Community assembly are being put forward as the first step towards federation and, although they may at first glance appear attractive, we must stop and ask ourselves to what extent the needs of democratic accountability will be served by electing MPs to a distant, powerless parliament? People today are concerned about the control and responsiveness of political power, but how can this be secured if power is abandoned, as has already happened by virtue of our Community membership?

What is more, this process could be accelerated in the future if the powerless parliament were to be given political muscle. Power is already too far removed from those from whom it springs and to whom it should be accountable, and hence the significant debate over devolution that is taking place within the UK. But devolution and Community centralisation cannot be pursued hand in hand. They are not compatible, and therefore a genuine choice will confront us before long concerning the vital question of where power should lie and how it should be exercised. A federal super-state will serve no useful purpose, and indeed the damage, both political and economic, which it would cause could be irreparable.

What then can we do, faced with the problems of Community membership, in order to ease the burdens that it places upon us? There are three main avenues of action to be pursued.

Firstly, we must oppose all moves towards a federal super-state. It would be wrong to suggest that such an occurrence is imminent, but, having identified the deep crisis in which the Community finds itself, it is possible that it will attempt to fight its way out by means of a massive step towards federalism. The needs of democratic accountability and economic regeneration would not be served at all by such a step, all the more so if it stemmed from a panic reaction to the crisis in the Community, rather than from a genuine popular desire for its existence.

Secondly, we must rigorously scrutinise and publicise the effects and implications of Community membership. The referendum vote last June (which we must accept) did not, however, commit us to accept everything that the Community proposes, just as it did not bind us to a static organisation. Every new proposal must be widely examined for its implications, and its contents discussed. Unless we are aware of what is going on, how can we react? There is a job of education to be done.

Thirdly, we must fight to defend Labour Party policies within both

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the government and the Community. At the very least, the government must be held to its renegotiation commitments, but beyond that we must ensure that Community membership is not allowed to become an obstacle to the implementation of the socialist policies on the strength of which the Labour government gained power. Whether it be the forced raising of food prices or an attempt to frustrate socially directed investment, all incursions from the Community that threaten Labour Party policy must be resisted.

A year has passed since the government chose to take a different view of Community membership from that taken by the Labour Party as a whole, and the events of the past year have come to show that the Labour Party's instincts were correct. The Community is now an established fact of political life, and while we may recognise that it is a political and economic anachronism that has little but trouble to offer us, we must not fail to be fully aware of its realities. After all, the Community's failings may one day help us to see the direction in which we ought to be travelling.

THE 'DESTABILISERS'

Julius Pilchick

UNDER the heading 'World pours money into Chile', the *Times*, Saturday, February 21, 1976, revealed that 'since Chile's right-wing military government took power in a coup two and a half years ago it has received about 2,000 million dollars (£1,000 million) in foreign credits.'

This, it continues, is in marked contrast to what happened during the previous 'leftist' regime of President Allende, when loans from international organisations and private commercial banks such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank almost ceased. Thus does the kinship between big business and fascism manifest itself, as always, in its struggle against progress and socialism.

It was this modest attempt at reform by a moderate, progressive government that provoked the most vicious backlash on the part of multinational monopoly capital (led by ITT) since Hitler. The *coup* was preceded by the usual overt and covert dirty tricks, which these elements are fully trained to employ, with the usual results—mass repression, imprisonment, torture. The pattern is first to destabilise* the economy by blocking normal trade and credit facilities to the

* 'Destabilise' is a new word from the US with which it appears we are going to have to live.

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elected government of the country, then to finance the activities of local reactionary parties and groups, then the *coup*. Finance to prop up the fascist government then becomes miraculously plentiful and readily available.

Multinational monopoly capital and its agencies do not shrink from using any nefarious method in order to preserve a grip on investment spheres. Italy, where the Communist Party has made significant electoral advance, causing alarm and despondency in ruling circles at home and abroad, is another example. The possibility of Communist participation in government (not, heaven forbid, actual power) has frightened the destabilisers out of their wits. Nora Beloff writes in the Sunday *Observer* (February 22, 1976): 'The fear that the communists would come into the government has been the major factor in the Italian crisis and the run on the lira.' And, as a contributor to the *Times Europa Review* (March 2, 1976) says: 'It was a somewhat absurd crisis which has shown up the fragility not only of Italy's *stabilisation* but, by the backlash it has produced on all other currencies, of the entire Western system' (emphasis added).

Furthermore, no less a person than President Ford, in his bid to out-do his Republican rival, Ronald Reagan, in the New Hampshire primary for the presidential candidacy, felt obliged to warn the Italian people that, if there were Communist participation in the government, Italy would be expelled from Nato.

However, the Italian people will doubtless remain undeterred by such intervention in their own affairs and will exercise their right to elect their own government in their own way in their own country.

France, too, has been subjected to a similar intervention by the indefatigable destabilisers. Dr Henry Kissinger's messenger boy, a Mr Herman Cohen of the Paris US Embassy, delivered a warning to the French Socialists 'to be very prudent in their relations with the Communists.' The US, it seems, is extremely disturbed by Socialist-Communist co-operation to achieve a left government at the next elections.

Apparently President Ford, ITT and Lockheed are not impressed or convinced that the new programme of the French Communist Party deserves their credulity, believing it to be only an electoral stratagem. The French people, too, will no doubt draw the appropriate conclusions when the time comes to elect their new government.

Deeply concerned by the political risks inherent in the present economic crisis of the capitalist world, monopoly capital attempts all manner of destabilising and subversive expedients in order to 'roll back Communism' (shades of Winston Churchill and the cold war).

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They cannot accept the fact that it is precisely the anarchy and instability of the system which produces the challenge to the rule of capital.

An illuminating illustration of the anarchic operation of the system appeared in an edited version of the proceedings of a colloquium (held in April 1973 at the University of Nottingham) by J. S. G. Wilson and C. F. Scheffer, quoted in the *Times* (September 26, 1974) at which the opening statement was made by the then Governor of the Bank of England, Lord O'Brien:

> There is no doubt that transfers of liquid balances by multinational companies did account for an important part of the transfers which eventually led to the floating of the pound, the devaluation of the dollar, the floating of the yen, and the situation of widespread floating in which we now find ourselves.

Led, in other words, to the currency chaos in the capitalist world, for which people everywhere are still paying the price in terms of inflation, unemployment, and falling living standards. Lord O'Brien has given an expert description of the destabilising propensities of monopoly capitalism, with particular reference to the multinational corporations in their race for maximum profit.

Frustrated and disconcerted by the intractability of the present crisis, the bourgeoisie and their quite tractable media present highly coloured and concocted versions of affairs in the Soviet Union and the socialist democracies, with the willing co-operation of that 'great Russian patriot', Solzhenytsin, the modern Rasputin-like figure of hate.

In sharp contrast to the disarray in the capitalist world the Soviet Union and the socialist democracies present a picture of steady, consistent advance in all spheres. Inflation, unemployment, falling living standards: this is not their way of life at all. The socialist state guarantees consistent advance; the destabilisers cannot exercise their expertise there. The *Times* (March 6, 1976) bears witness: 'Apart from agriculture things are not going too badly for the Soviet Union.' And Brezhnev's report to the 25th Congress (a report of panoramic proportions, ranging over national and international affairs) illustrates the scale of advance made by the Soviet Union and the socialist democracies, despite difficulties and set-backs. In the past five years their industries grew four times as fast as those of the capitalist states; in 1975 the industrial output of the socialist community in Europe was more than double that of the EEC.

A highlight of his report on the results of the ninth five year plan

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was the following: 'To an economic potential, the building up of which required nearly half a century, we have been able to add a potential as large again in only ten years.' The scale of advance illustrates the superiority of socialism over capitalism, a phenomenon which so perturbs Mrs Margaret Thatcher and Co. The contrast between irresistible advance in the socialist countries and deepening decline in the capitalist world is startling. With Soviet economic capacity *doubling every ten years*, the immediate future for the Soviet people is bright indeed—*provided there is no war*. For the USSR and its people even the thought of war is inadmissible, despite the lurid, horrific propaganda of the Chalfonts and Thatchers which cannot hide the fact that bourgeois democracy, dominated by monopoly capital, has reached the stage where, even with the aid of right-wing social democracy, it cannot solve the people's problems.

Business leaders insist that before they call off their investment strike they must be assured of a cheap labour force. This they hope to achieve by means of the government's prices and incomes policy, plus the creation of a substantial reserve of unemployed as a permanent feature of the British economy. For the mass of the British people this must be quite unacceptable, and it is the bounden duty of the labour and trade union movement effectively to challenge this policy of permanent recurring crisis.

The attempt by right-wing Labour to make capitalism work cannot succeed. Only a determined socialist policy pursued by the labour movement can transform the situation. A strong, united movement is the only guarantee that capitalist 'solutions' are frustrated.

WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Two hundred years ago, during the struggle for American independence, women colonists demonstrated their commitment to the revolutionary cause. When hostilities opened in 1775, women played an active role in promoting the war effort, both on the military side as combatants, and in a variety of auxiliary services: as spies, messengers, nurses, cooks, seamstresses and laundresses. In 1776, Abigail Adams described the scene in Boston:

'The bells rang . . . and every face appeared joyful. . . . After dinner the King's arms were taken down from the State House and every vestige of him from every place . . . and burnt. . . . This ends royal authority in this state, and all the people shall say amen.'

The engraving reproduced on our centre pages is from the collection at the Marx Memorial Library, London. The exhibition, *The Events of '76—Liberation and Revolution in America*, which proved so popular in April and May, is to reopen at the library for a further two weeks from July 4.

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Molly Pitcher is probably the best-known heroine of the An
her husband's position at an artillery po

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revolution. At the battle of Monmouth (1778) she took over
ı he collapsed from heat and exhaustion.

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SOUTH VIETNAM 1976

(The formal unification of north and south Vietnam has now taken place. Vietnam is the first of the divided countries to overcome a disunity imposed by imperialist intervention in their internal affairs. The general election for the National Assembly of reunified Vietnam was held on April 25, 1976. The poll in the north was 99 per cent of the electorate; in the south it varied between electoral divisions from 95 to 100 per cent. The number of candidates standing for the 492 seats was 606; the candidates receiving the highest votes were leading figures in the Vietnam Workers' Party and the National Liberation Front.

Shortly before the election, the director of the Hanoi publishing house, Dr Nguyen Khan Vien, made an extensive tour of the south. He afterwards gave an interview to staff members of the Vietnam Courier, *from which we reprint some of the main points.*—Ed. *LM)*

Question—What is the strongest impression left on you by your recent trip to the south?

Answer—Six US presidents, from Truman to Ford, spent $150 billion trying to create a separate South Vietnam, to turn our countrymen in the south into foreigners. But they have completely failed. We have found ourselves, after twenty, thirty, forty years of separation, all deeply Vietnamese. As far south as Cape Ca Mau, in the remotest villages, in houses on stilts built along rivers where I stayed to eat and sleep with my friends and relatives, even with those I had not known before, it was a great emotional reunion of north and south. Everyone embracing again. People lavished care on me, asked me for news, and we kept talking and talking for whole nights. And when we stood to pay respect in silence at the graves of comrades shot or tortured to death by the enemy, we felt deeply bound together, those of us from the north and from the south, in life as well as in death, by bonds which the years of suffering have only strengthened.

Question—What subject is of most interest to our southern countrymen?

Answer—Of course we talked of everything, but people's eyes brightened and ears were pricked up when we spoke of Uncle Ho. The second subject, for those who had not had the opportunity to take part directly in the fighting, was the way victory had been won. They had seen the overwhelming numbers of the US forces: aircraft, tanks, navy. They were still amazed at the total defeat of the power of the US.

Question—Some foreign news reports have suggested an armed revolt. Is there any substance in this?

Answer—I toured south Vietnam for two months, unescorted, the length and breadth of it, the most densely populated quarters of Saigon, as well as the country villages of Ca Mau, and the mountain area of Da Lat, without encountering any sign of disturbance. A million puppet troops and some 200,000 puppet policemen were set free soon after victory. Of this million,

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some small groups of toughs have taken to the forests; driven by hunger, they occasionally stop a car to rob the passengers. There are a few acts of banditry, for example in Saigon: hold-ups, robberies or burglaries. That is all. The failure of the CIA to foment resistance is obvious in spite of the abundance of dollars and weapons that can still be found more or less everywhere, and the presence of agents and killers, well-trained and well-indoctrinated over many years. Not the least sign could induce you to imagine any possibility of civil war or armed opposition. Those who speak about it are indulging in wishful thinking.

Question—How is it that civil war is impossible?

Answer—The greatest danger threatening a revolutionary power after victory is obviously civil war. But this presupposes the existence of social classes and political forces with the potential to mobilise factions within the population, and to offer to the people some political alternative. In south Vietnam now there are no more feudalists, no more landowners, no more mandarins or rural notables. With the revolutionary storm that has been sweeping through the land for over thirty years, with the intensive bombings of the countryside by the Americans, the feudalists have disappeared from the political scene. The compradore capitalists, closely tied to US intervention, have now lost their main prop, and their means of surviving—banks, foreign trade, rice trading—have been taken away from them.

The new regime has a possible use for the national capitalists who in turn cannot but co-operate with the revolutionary power. The Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) has in effect worked out an economic policy with five sectors: state-run, capitalist, joint state-private, co-operative and private self-employed enterprise. Any opposition to the people's power could only come from the remnants of the huge military, police, administrative and political machine, entirely the creature of US technical and financial power. After thirty years of national and revolutionary struggle, all the reactionary forces in Vietnam have lost their social basis in the country.

Question—Have there been any counter-revolutionary activities of any importance?

Answer—It is evident that the huge military, political and police machine created by the US which was in active control for 20 years could not disappear overnight, especially as Washington still strives to maintain elements of opposition and sabotage groups. You certainly know about the affair of the Vinh Son church, which has brought to light the actions of Catholic extremists who worked hand in glove with elements of the former puppet army. But these are isolated attempts on a small scale. Here are two concrete examples to show you the failure of US endeavours to foment resistance. On the eve of Tet (the Vietnamese lunar New Year festival) this year, I was strolling along the streets of Saigon until 2 a.m. without any feeling of apprehension. This would have been a good opportunity for saboteurs to provoke ugly incidents. The population was in the streets, and for the first time since 1968 the public in Saigon were free to set off firecrackers. Some soldiers joining in the festivities even shot off their guns into the air. Firecrackers were heard everywhere. It would have been easy for a saboteur to toss a grenade or to open fire on the crowd, then quickly disappear in the crowded streets. But not one such incident occurred.

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Another example. Electricity comes from the Da Nhim hydro-power station which is linked to Saigon by a 250km high-tension line. For ten years the pro-US administration was unable to ensure the protection of this line, and the station was never in use. To protect a 250km line going through sparsely inhabited mountain areas was practically impossible. Today that line functions normally, which proves that, if there are saboteurs, they are not very effective. A high functionary of the former regime told me he was very surprised that since liberation Saigon has never run short of electricity.

Question—What was the Tet festival like in Saigon?

Answer—In Saigon it was first of all the traditional festival with apricot blossom and other flowers, fruit-sweets and sticky cakes. Flower sellers were surprised to be selling so many flowers. They had expected a sharp fall in sales this year. What was new were the firecrackers which were going off all night long. For people who had known the Tet of previous years, two things struck them: the orderliness in the main market place, where the stands were better arranged, and where loudspeakers did not pour out a deluge of jarring, noisy advertisements; and the decrease in the number of people going to temples and pagodas to ask for amulets or prophetic lucky dips for telling fortunes, although, in comparison with Hanoi, the figure remained considerable.

First and foremost, Tet was for the young. The Tet of 1976 was dedicated to young people. For the first time for many, many years you could see them taking to the streets, not to protest but to enjoy the freedom of walking where they liked, without fear of being drafted and sent to barracks. So they streamed into the streets in Saigon as well as in all the villages, to enjoy the new pleasure of mixing with the crowd. To understand the near intoxication which caught them up in these days of Tet one has to appreaciate that many young people had had a finger—the one which pulled the trigger—cut off in order to escape the draft. I saw quite a few lads with severed fingers. The operation plus medical clearance cost from 100,000 to 500,000 piastres in the old currency.

I found the same signs of joy in a fishermen's village on the Bay Hap river in the Ca Mau area. People here had taken refuge in the forest during ten long years to avoid the draft and the bombing. Since liberation they have been able to settle again as fishermen along the rivers and to move about freely. In the villages, besides the end to the bombings and shellings, people appreciate the fact of being able to escape the blackmail of the police. For people who had suffered so long from the war it was really a Tet of peace, of independence, of regained freedom.

Question—There is much talk about difficulties. What is the truth about these?

Answer—There is no end to difficulties. The contrary would be surprising. For 21 years the Americans, with all their technical and economic power, built up a regime which has finally collapsed. Upon the ruins of that regime we have to build a new society, new institutions, encourage new ways of life, of thinking, while doing away with the legacies of the past and readjusting, harmonising, restructuring, weaving together what is being built in the north and the south.

Someone who has only seen Saigon or caught a glimpse of the countryside along the highways would get a wrong impression of the situation. This is the

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case with many foreign journalists, for Saigon has, so to speak, lived apart from the war. During a tour that took me from the 17th parallel down to Cape Ca Mau, what I noticed in the first place was the omnipresence of war, the magnitude of the destruction. Barbed wire, watchtowers, munition and fuel dumps, airfields, barracks, blockhouses, bunkers, radar stations, pylons, everywhere, everywhere. The war machine installed by the Americans imposed its presence, blocked the horizon. One travelled beside barracks and base-camps for miles and miles in every province, along the seashore, along the mountain sides, in the swamps. In the southernmost region, near Cape Ca Mau, on wide stretches of marshland, in a province where people wade in the mud, where you find not a grain of sand or gravel, the Americans built the Nam Can base, complete with an airfield, a jetty on a river where 200 craft could dock at a time, barracks for 3,000 men, with artillery, radar equipment, electric generators, and for the officers all the comforts, air conditioners, refrigerators and TV sets, while all around there were endless empty forests and swamps.

Then there is the war destruction, immense, incalculable. Time and again I stood amazed at the sight of villages razed to the ground in the provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Ben Tre, Ca Mau and at Cu Chi. Here you can no longer see the least trace of homes, gardens, roads, rice-fields, and people who return can no longer find even a bamboo tree to build a hut. Binh Duong village in Quang Nam province, for instance, contained eight thousand people in 1960; 90 per cent of the houses were of brick and tile. After years of war not one single house, not a single tree, is left. The forest of filao pines, which sheltered the village from the sea, was razed, burnt down. The sea dike, which kept salt water from flooding the paddy fields, was flattened. The canal which brought fresh water into the fields had been filled up. Six thousand inhabitants have returned to the village. Every family has at least one dead or disabled: victims of the bombings, tortures or summary executions. This includes 2,000 crippled or sick as a result of these ordeals. Two thousand for a single village! You can imagine the number of disabled, of sick people, whom the revolutionary power has to take care of, to whom it has to distribute food and clothing, whom it must help in building a house or finding a job. From 1965 to 1975, according to US reports, 10 million people were compelled to leave their villages because of the bombings and shellings and the spraying of toxic chemicals.

Never forget this if you want to understand what happened in the past and what is happening today. In south Vietnam US aircraft have destroyed thousands of villages, while in north Vietnam towns and industrial centres were their particular targets. No country has ever suffered so much destruction, and reconstruction tasks are tremendous. You must always bear in mind this vast war destruction if you want to judge current events.

Question—Are there many difficulties in the regions not affected by war?

Answer—In the areas controlled by the US, not affected by bombs, the problem is quite different. Washington has, so to speak, drowned the south of our country under a triple deluge: a deluge of bombs (and other lethal means of destruction); a deluge of consumer goods; a deluge of ideological and cultural propaganda.

The more bombs fell upon the free areas, the more goods Saigon and other US-held areas received. The contrast is striking when you go from the free

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zones, or from towns in the north which had been bombed for years, to Saigon. Saigon is roaring with thousands of vehicles, full of American, Japanese and French goods—high buildings soaring above shanty towns and noisy slums. Fictitious prosperity, some people call it. I would rather say a costly prosperity, all too dearly paid for. If some countries paid for the Mercedeses and the Chevrolets, the refrigerators and other gadgets, by the sale of their oil, south Vietnam paid for them with flesh and blood. Half-a-million US soldiers cost Washington $30 billion a year to maintain, whereas one million Thieu mercenaries cost at most $2 billion. This means that a Saigon soldier cost 30 times less. A real Shylock, Washington did not make gifts as a favour but swapped dollars for blood. When I saw these smart buildings, refrigerators and all that in Saigon, I could not help thinking of the graves scattered over the fields, of the crippled lives that went begging in the streets.

Each year Saigon imported on average $750 million worth of goods, not counting the dollars received for military construction and those spent by US troops and services. About one-and-a-half million people and their families, say 6 or 7 million in all, lived on wages and salaries paid by the US, not counting the people servicing the machinery. Today this manna has disappeared. Saigon and other cities, and regions under former US control, no longer soak up that yearly billion dollars. Prices of goods naturally have been soaring. The traders, who number hundreds of thousands, naturally indulge in hoarding, which makes prices rise; the most fantastic rumours are spread, building up a kind of collective psychosis. In brief, shortages due to speculation and the cessation of American aid have created a situation which had two major consequences: serious unemployment, involving from three to four million people; an instability of prices which makes life very difficult for those who live on fixed incomes, salaries and wages. In the immediate future, the essential problem is to stabilise prices, while in the long run it is to create new production centres capable of providing jobs for several million people.

Question—How did the revolutionary authorities cope with these difficulties?

Answer—First, urgent measures were taken. Food relief was distributed to hundreds of thousands of needy families in Saigon alone. During Tet, the revolutionary authorities also offered these families gifts so that they could celebrate the festival properly for the first time. It also gave temporary shelter to families that had slept in the streets for years. It endeavoured to assure farmers, fishing communities and transport workers the necessary fuel to operate their tractors, pumps, motor boats and lorries. The supply of chemical fertilisers was much more difficult in view of the shortage of foreign exchange. Works abandoned by foreigners or compradore capitalists who had fled overseas were taken over by the state. Those belonging to the national capitalists and traders were given help by the authorities in fuel or raw materials specially imported or coming from the north. But the most important thing was the start of a plan for total economic conversion consisting of: 1. switching over from a neo-colonial economy, completely dependent on foreigners, to a national and independent economy; 2. gradually building socialist structures in order to achieve a socialist economy with the north and south completely integrated, which will make it possible to pool the resources and potentials of a reunified Vietnamese nation with a population of over 45 millions.

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You can see that this is a difficult undertaking. While the first measures are being applied, specialist teams are making on-the-spot in-depth enquiries to gather the necessary data to work out the 1976-80 five year plan on a nation-wide scale from north to south. The Americans had worked out projects for their post-war economic development plans: the best known is David Lilienthal's. These projects contain valuable data, but in the main they are not much more than propaganda stunts intended to push the US Congress into granting credits necessary to maintain the Thieu regime.

Question—What first measures have already been applied?

Answer—The state has first of all taken over the basis of the economy hitherto in the hands of foreigners or compradore capitalists: banking and foreign trade, for example. No foreign exploitation of an imperialist type, no economic speculation of a compradore type, will now be possible in Vietnam.

The state has taken over the domestic trade in rice, which has made it possible to stabilise the prices of things essential for the basic needs of the population. A network of state-run trade will be completed so as gradually to stabilise the prices of other goods. For the time being, it is not yet strong enough to prevent hoarding and speculation. The export of rubber, frozen crayfish and lobsters, and handicraft articles are objects of particular attention. North-south trade relations which have already been started are playing a more and more important role in economic development. Coal, phosphate fertilisers and certain engineering products from the north are invaluable for the south, which in return supplies foodstuffs to the north and light industrial products.

Question—What important problems are there for Saigon in particular?

Answer—Saigon was first and foremost a city of refugees, a gathering place for all those driven away from their villages by the bombings, military operations and repressions. The city contained about half-a-million inhabitants in 1945. The figure shot up to 1,200,000 in 1958 to 2,500,000 in 1969 and to 3,500,000 now. The last weeks of the war saw some hundreds of thousands more people come pouring into the city. This influx of refugees enabled the Americans to recruit the mercenaries and policemen they needed to implement their last-ditch policy, but at the same time it produced a wretched mass of people jammed into unhealthy slums and shanty towns supporting life on anything they could find.

Saigon was a city that produced practically nothing. Statistics of the former regime estimated the share of industrial production at 7 per cent, while services and administration represented nearly 70 per cent. A policy of conversion and reform of the economy is therefore necessary. The first measure was to organise the return of refugees to their home villages, so as to reclaim the lands left waste; but so many villages had been razed that it was necessary to open up new lands. These are the 'new economic zones' where the state, while laying new roads, digging wells, building hospitals and schools, supplies part of the building materials to help the population to build new villages for themselves.

Army and youth organisations are making their contribution to this work. Many of these regions are very dangerous because of unexploded mines, bombs and shells still concealed there. Liberation army fighters have turned to this dangerous mine-sweeping job. In Binh-Tri-Thien province, for instance, in an area of 4,700 hectares, they had to remove 885,000 mines and shells.

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Farm workers and children were being killed every day in these areas by these deadly remains. American weapons may continue to kill for many years.

However, in the course of ten months 400,000 people have been able either to return to their own villages, or to return to the countryside to open up new lands. Other measures of economic conversion have been carried out, particularly the reorganisation of many industrial enterprises and handicraft workshops. But in the 11th District of Saigon, for instance, although 440 projects have already been organised, there are still 5,000 without work and 20,000 only partly employed.

EMIGRATION: ITALY AND IRELAND

Paolo Cinanni

WITH the unification of Italy and with the abolition of old customs tariffs, the stronger northern industrial set-up soon conquered the southern markets, destroying the weaker and more backward southern industrial structures. The large southern landowners were given, in exchange, a free hand in arbitrarily taking over state-owned land, evicting the peasants who took from it their means of subsistence.

Owing to this 'iniquitous pact' between southern landowners and northern industrialists, large areas of unemployment began to develop, with mill workers made redundant by factory closures, and peasants evicted from 'common lands'. The ruling classes encouraged emigration to get rid of the resulting unemployment.

Emigration however is a vicious circle, a process which aggravates a pre-existing unequal development and constantly reproduces itself: the exodus of labour causes the decay of old productive forms without their replacement. This decay causes new emigration which in turn causes more decay, in an unending spiral. A similar but *opposite* development occurs in countries of immigration, where available capital increases its value by promoting the immigration of a supplementary labour force which, when employed, produces additional surplus-value. This surplus-value, turned into added capital, requires new foreign labour, which in turn produces more surplus-value, aggravating the world's pre-existing imbalance and uneven development.

Due to the emigration of workers there is in fact a *transfer* of productive potential from the system which has borne the cost of educating and training them to the system which employs them and wholly benefits from them.

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More recently, during the 1958-70 period, among the six EEC members, the countries of immigration, France, West Germany and Benelux, have registered a 3½ million increase in population. Italy alone, the only emigration country, registered a decrease of 2 million people. There has been a comparable decrease in the employable population: employment in the immigration countries has increased during the same period by 4 million employees, while in Italy it decreased by 1,250,000.

The demographic consequences of emigration are far more serious because they are permanent. This can be clearly seen by comparing the relevant data of Ireland and Calabria, two areas afflicted by forced emigration. In 1841 Ireland had a population of 8,222,664 people, whereas in 1963 it had only 4,264,341 people (including the six counties) because of this 'dual situation' created by one-and-a-half centuries of emigration between Ireland and Great Britain.

Similarly in Italy during the last few censuses, a population loss has been registered, notwithstanding the higher demographic increase because of emigration and internal migration from the southern regions. Furthermore, there has not been a decrease in unemployment. Calabria registers the same level of unemployment and under-employment as in 1961, notwithstanding the emigration of 555,153 people and a population loss of 82,148 in the period between 1961 and 1971.

In Italy, particularly Calabria, the most serious consequences of migration are political and social. On the one hand there developed the *brigantaggio** of the last century as a peasant reaction to the evictions from 'common lands'. On the other hand, there was the violent explosion of fascist subversion in Reggio Calabria a few years ago which would never have occurred when the Calabrian peasants occupied the lands and guarded our new democracy, before being forced to emigrate *en masse*.

Similarly in Ireland, from the time of the historical Fenian movement, one finds present day terrorism as a consequence of and reaction to the uprooting and frustration of oppressed minorities. If one recalls the subhuman living conditions of Irish immigrants in England during the last century as depicted by Engels, their miserable lives in hovels in the poorest areas of London; if one recalls the 'Little Italys', ghettoes of shacks at the margins of large American cities, which for a long time housed numberless Italian immigrants,

* Literally, brigandage; this occurred particularly around Naples and in Sicily between 1860 and 1870 (translator).

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it is possible to find the causes and the background of desolation from which Irish terrorism and American gansterism have emerged, as if by historical nemesis.

American gangsterism, Calabrian or Sicilian mafia, Irish terrorism, are all the poisonous fruits of the political decisions of those who held workers to be only chattels. They suffer discrimination everywhere: by being forced into the most menial and unrewarding jobs, unable to obtain employment suited to their skills, being paid lower salaries and enjoying only limited social benefits. They are driven to seek refuge in their 'national' ghettoes by being discriminated against in their attempts to find accommodation; their children suffer an educational alienation, and they experience a cultural, political and often trade union discrimination; they are taken over gradually by insecurity and frustration and are often made the object of hatred and xenophobia. All these elements arouse in them a rejection of society, a desire to return home which, as years go by, becomes intolerable and often gives rise to emotional and psychological instability.

Summing up, it is clearly possible to see the dual results of migration: capital increases the active population in the immigration country by using a foreign labour force without bearing the cost of educating and training it; by paying lower salaries, unit costs are decreased and increased profits allow a total increase in production and in exports, a widening of the consumers' market within the country, without giving rise to inflation, as immigrants produce more than they consume and take their share in paying taxes.

To the advantages accruing to the immigration country correspond parallel disadvantages to the emigration country: through a reduction of its active population it suffers a decrease of potential productivity and competitiveness. As the OECD council has had finally to admit, emigrants' 'remittances' are not a 'compensation' but, in the same way as when capital is exported, they worsen inflation in those countries and regions they are supposed to compensate, importing inflation from the immigration countries.

The emigration of labour in our modern world is a phenomenon quite different from that of establishing settlements: it is true that it enriches the immigration countries, but at the same time it creates serious social problems within them; it completely impoverishes the emigration country and has negative effects on the working class as a whole, degrading it and creating deep divisions within it.

Today it is necessary to eliminate enforced emigration which is the foreign exploitation of an exported labour force, in order to achieve

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at long last mutual solidarity and international collaboration, to guarantee a real and effective 'free circulation' for those workers who wish to emigrate, providing them with equality of conditions and treatment with the local working class, and adequate compensation to their countries of origin. Present day emigration is undoubtedly for those countries the most unequal and unbalanced 'trade agreement'.

CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE

Ken Biggs

IN the summer of last year, representatives of the 24 Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean met in Cuba. Their purpose was to assess the stage reached in the revolutionary struggle of the region's working class and its allies, notably the poor and landless peasants. The parties defined US imperialism as the main enemy of the Latin American and Caribbean masses.

A profound impact has been made on the Caribbean, as elsewhere, by the activities and achievements of the socialist countries, the national liberation movement and the international working class. As a result, in conditions of world capitalist crisis and the imposition of peaceful coexistence and detente on imperialism, the progressive forces of the Caribbean are gaining strength.

The major English-speaking countries are the islands of Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados, together with Guyana on the north-east coast of the Latin American mainland.

The pace of anti-imperialist advance is different from territory to territory, for a variety of historical reasons. The pacemakers in developing anti-imperialist policies are the people of Jamaica and Guyana. It is significant that the ruling party in each country took office with the blessing of US imperialism and its local reactionary allies: the People's National Congress (PNC) in Guyana in 1964-65, after the imperialist-organised overthrow of the Marxist-led government of Cheddi Jagan; and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the People's National Party (PNP) in Jamaica in 1972, when US imperialism switched its support from the discredited government of the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP).

The change to anti-imperialist policies by both governments, especially since 1973-74, has been dictated by a number of interrelated circumstances: popular unrest, showing itself in pressure for anti-imperialist economic measures; economic difficulties caused by

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imperialist control of key sectors of the economy and market, aggravated by capitalism's crisis; the growth of a powerful anti-imperialist movement in Latin America and throughout the entire non-aligned world; the political struggle for new policies waged by local petty bourgeois democrats, progressives and communists; and above all, the spectacular successes scored by the world socialist system, in particular revolutionary Cuba.

Measures have been introduced in both Jamaica and Guyana which have curbed the power of the multinational companies. In Guyana, with the recent announcement that the government is about to negotiate the take-over of the sugar and other interests owned by the UK-based Booker Brothers, all the main foreign-based companies will shortly be in state hands: the north American Alcan and Reynolds bauxite interests were nationalised in 1971 and 1974, as were the sugar plantations and factories owned by Jessel Securities (UK) in 1975.

In Jamaica, where the government's approach has been more cautious, considerably higher taxes and royalties were imposed on the mainly US bauxite companies in 1974. The state is now negotiating for majority shareholdings in them. At the same time both governments have established or strengthened diplomatic relations with various socialist countries, including Cuba and the USSR. Trade discussions have usually followed, since both Guyana and Jamaica suffer badly from the unequal trade terms imposed by the developed capitalist countries, in the form of high-priced imports and low-priced exports of raw materials and foodstuffs. The boom in sugar and to a lesser extent bauxite prices was short-lived and of little long-term importance in meeting the needs of either Jamaica or Guyana.

Hence their prominence in the movement of non-aligned countries for a new international economic order. But what has enraged the US imperialists and local reaction most of all has been the close relations established by both governments with revolutionary Cuba. As well as diplomatic links, they have led to extended trade, exchanges of delegations, student exchanges, political exchanges between the Cuban Communist Party and both the PNC and the PPP, and economic and technical co-operation.

After the triumph of the Cuban national liberation movement in 1959, the transition to socialist revolution was a speedy one, made possible by the emergence of a united revolutionary Marxist-Leninist vanguard based on Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate and the first Communist Party (founded in

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1925). In Jamaica, Guyana and the rest of the English-speaking Caribbean the road to socialism is likely to be more protracted—basically because the working class is less developed than in Cuba.

In Jamaica and Guyana it is the democratic petty bourgeoisie which is guiding the anti-imperialist course from their positions in the government and ruling parties. In Jamaica the situation of the petty bourgeois forces in the ruling PNP is different from that of their Guyanese counterparts. The PNP is a broader organisation than the PNC. It contains a powerful big bourgeois element, well-entrenched in the government and parliamentary party. The big bourgeoisie opposes the anti-imperialist policies of Manley and the petty bourgeois democrats. It does not shrink from collaborating with the opposition JLP and the US imperialists.

The evidence of last year's by-elections is that Manley's anti-imperialist and reforming policies have increased support for the PNP. The masses welcome such policies as friendship with Cuba, the diversion of bauxite profits for local use, the encouragement of sugar workers' co-operatives, the expansion of public works to absorb some of the thousands of jobless, Project Land Lease (which puts more land into the hands of small and landless peasants) and the Minimum Wage Law. They welcome Jamaica's new international role in the non-aligned movement.

As in Guyana, the danger from the right is very real, and rather than mobilise the masses against it (as the left has demanded) the Manley government has shown a willingness to make concessions to the big bourgeoisie: the ban on anti-imperialist demonstrations, the anti-union Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act, the Gun Court law, the creation of the National Housing Trust (to which all workers pay 2 per cent of their meagre earnings), tax legislation which penalises workers, and so on.

In Guyana the main right-wing challenge comes from outside the PNC. There the big bourgeoisie, landowners and anti-democratic petty bourgeoisie have separate parties, such as United Force (UF) with which the PNC collaborated before and after the overthrow of Jagan's progressive government. The big bourgeoisie and landowners try to foment opposition to the PNC's new policies (and to the PPP) by means of crude racism and anti-communism. In the words of Cheddi Jagan: 'Their propaganda line is that the PNC is bent on destroying the Indian race and culture. . . .'

Because of this danger from the right the PPP has abandoned its policy of non-co-operation with the PNC government. This had applied since the 1973 election, when the PNC used troops to tamper

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with ballot boxes, and employed other devices to maintain itself in power. The PPP is working for the isolation of the reactionaries. Hence its new line of critical support for the government, which means 'giving support for any progressive measures, opposing any reactionary moves, and criticising all shortcomings.' Thus the PPP is engaged in struggle to defeat the right, defend the anti-imperialist and democratic gains and rally the masses for a socialist-orientated Guyana.

An important difference between Guyana and Jamaica is that there is no long-standing communist party in Jamaica, proved in struggle and with mass support. This is not to say that there are no left forces. There is a small Communist Party (CPJ) formed last year and looking forward to its first congress later this year. Its secretary is Chris Lawrence, an experienced trade union activist and secretary also of the Independent Trade Union Action Council.

A second communist organisation is the Workers' Liberation League (WLL) formed late in 1974, whose general secretary is Trevor Munroe, vice president of the University and Allied Workers' Union.

Communists of both the CPJ and the WLL have figured largely in the formation last November of a broad anti-imperialist front. The front's immediate aim is the mobilisation of the masses against the activities of the JLP leadership and their imperialist CIA backers, which work for the removal of the Manley government. In their campaign the right have used various techniques: anti-communism (especially scaremongering about Cuba and the USSR); open terror by gunmen, bombers and arsonists (starting in Kingston on January 4 and spreading to the rural areas since); economic sabotage, with thousands of bauxite and hotel workers laid off by US employers; investment boycotts by US and Jamaican capitalists; provoking of strikes to frighten the PNP middle class; in short, every technique associated with US 'destabilisation' programmes in Chile and elsewhere.

In the face of such an onslaught Manley has shown himself inclined to waver. But nevertheless, because of the pressure of the democratic forces, he has resisted bourgeois demands from within his own party for the disciplining of democrats, for breaking with Cuba and for a total wage freeze.

The right, however, remains strong. It is the argument of the left that it is the intervention of the working masses which will be decisive in winning the day for the policies of democratic advance and anti-imperialism.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Fighting Crime in the GDR

From John Peet
Our Berlin Correspondent

IN THE EARLY YEARS of the German Democratic Republic, the crime statistics seemed to prove that with the increasing consolidation of socialism, crime would 'wither away' and disappear without too much trouble. There was in fact a remarkable and very steady decline in the number of offences registered. Before the founding of the GDR, an average of 470,000 offences of all sorts were registered annually in what was then the Soviet Zone of Germany; in the first ten years of the GDR the yearly average ran at 157,000 offences. It fell in the next ten year period to an average of 132,000, and there was a further drop in the early 1970s.

Since then, however, the crime statistics have remained stationary, or even edged up a little, and it has become clear that the withering away of crime was not something which could be relied upon. At this point, however, it should be emphasised that even though crime figures have ceased to fall in the GDR, they still compare very favourably with those in neighbouring territories. West Berlin, for instance, with a population of just under two million, reports absolute crime figures higher than those reported for the whole of the GDR, which has a population of nearly 17 million. (These statistics are not strictly comparable since the definitions of an 'offence' vary between the two territories, but these differences are not of any great statistical importance.)

Criminologists and sociologists in the GDR believe firmly that the removal of the social and economic roots of crime will in the end cause crime to decline, but they stress that this is a long-term phenomenon. Old modes of thought and action obviously persist, and the infiltration of bourgeois ideology, particularly through West German TV and radio, which can be and are seen and heard in most parts of the GDR are obviously of significance. Many observers believe that recent upward trends in the crime rate may also be ascribed to steadily increasing prosperity. With attractive stereo-recorders and hi-fi sound systems in the shops a shop assistant has more temptation to dip his hand into the till than under conditions of austerity.

An overwhelming proportion of crimes reported in the GDR are relatively minor offences against property, in particular socialist property. Only about 5 per cent of all crime falls into the category of serious attacks upon the person, offences punishable with a minimum of two years imprisonment.

For a considerable period in the late 1960s and early 1970s it became almost difficult to get sent to prison in the GDR; almost every offence except blatant and large-scale crime led to a suspended sentence. The idea was undoubtedly good; persons receiving suspended sentences were in general released into the care of a factory work team, which was supposed to see to their rehabilitation. However, a shortage of probation officers, a general lack of supervision, and the extreme shortage of labour prevalent in the GDR meant that in very many cases the conditions of probation were not observed properly, and the offender slid once again into crime.

During 1975 the probation regulations were considerably tightened; offenders could be bound by the court to repay from earnings the money they had stolen, or make other recompense for the damage done;

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and the obligation to remain with the assigned work team was made more binding. In addition, persons previously sentenced to two prison terms will, in the case of a renewed offence, receive a sentence of at least one year.

It will be interesting to see in the coming years whether this new tightening of regulations will once again bring about a reduction in the crime rate.

Co-operative Politics

RICHARD BALFE's article (*LM*, April 1976), asserting that the Co-operative movement in 'an endeavour to gain trade' has tended to move away from its base and is increasingly seen as irrelevant to the problems of the labour movement, draws attention to a number of important factors concerning the role and development of the British Co-operative movement.

There can, of course, be no question of the Co-operative movement trading its way to socialism. Karl Marx in his inaugural address to the International Working Men's Association in 1864, showed that the movement would not be able to achieve its ultimate aims before the working class attained political power. Lenin emphasised in his article 'On Co-operation' in 1923 that the change in state power was the necessary prerequisite before 'the mere growth of co-operation is identical with the growth of socialism.'

The movement has been engulfed in bitter conflict with big business in the battle of the high street—very much part of the class struggle—during the past 20-25 years, and witnessed its share of retail trade declining by 5 per cent to 6.9 per cent between 1957 and 1973. This struggle has led to far-reaching changes taking place in the Co-operatives' organisation. Retail societies now number 227 compared with 743 in 1964. Big and modern supermarkets are more and more replacing the 'community' shop on the street corner.

Perhaps the most radical innovation was the decision of the South Suburban Co-operative Society to introduce dividend stamps in July 1967, to supersede the traditional dividend, and their swift adoption throughout the movement. Members and non-members alike receive cash payment on each completed book of stamps. Members may obtain a small additional sum at the termination of the annual accounting period by having payments credited to their share accounts. From available data it would seem that the Co-operative movement has at last begun to make tangible advances in trade, though only marginal for the time being.

The Co-operative Wholesale Society market research department indicates that something like one-third of Co-operative shoppers are now non-members, and suggests nothing to remedy this set-back.

Professor A. J. Allaway of the University of Leicester, in a discussion paper presented at the 1975 convention of the National Co-operative Education Association, expressed the view that it was within 'the bounds of possibility' that as a business the movement may now go from strength to strength, and yet cease in all but name to be a genuine expression of consumers' co-operation.

Societies have become largely dominated by chief executive officers and professional managers, with the lay leadership (boards of directors and other committee persons) appearing to be self-perpetuating oligarchies.

Another factor tending to mitigate against member participation is the movement's involvement in traditional capitalist operations such as

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the Co-operative Insurance Society's entanglement in the property market. Such activities, no less than the 'commercial' manner in which many trade unions invest their funds and use non-co-operative printing, banking and other services, should be avoided.

Above all else, the chronic lack of member involvement stems from the movement's historical progression in the second half of the last century when the very success of consumers' co-operation helped to divert attention away from the original social and economic perspectives enunciated by the Rochdale Pioneers.

Last July, the National Council of Labour recognised the need to promote co-operative experiments in profitable industries rather than failing privately-owned concerns, and that these might be directed by the kind of Co-operative Development Agency outlined by the Labour Party in its 1969 statement *Agenda for a Generation* and further elaborated in *Labour's Programme for Britain* three years later, which the Labour government has currently under review.

'In all these activities, strong attention will be paid to emphasising the democratic structure and social role co-operatives can play in our society.'

Such measures aimed at extending consumer, producer and other co-operatives, alongside the public ownership of large-scale industries and financial institutions, would mean an important contribution being made towards bringing about (in the words of the *Labour Party Manifesto*, October 1974) 'a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families.'

JOHN BLOOM
Sutton, Surrey

Growing Unity in the French Trade Union Movement?

AFTER A RATHER disappointing post-war record of internecine quarrelling, embryonic signs are now visible that a functionally unified trade union movement in France is more than an unrealistic dream.

This is not to imply that a reconciliation will be frictionless; indeed, the increased competition for the same electoral groups, which less clearly demarcated ideological alternatives between the Socialist and Communist Parties cannot but produce, will remain a significant obstacle to detente. Furthermore, there will continue to be major disagreements over important issues, as the present dispute over the desirability of universal suffrage to the European parliament clearly indicates. Nevertheless, chances for substantive co-operation within the *Fédération de gauche* have markedly improved. And political developments in Italy, which suggest the possibility of a Communist-Socialist coalition in the years ahead, are likely to reinforce, if only by example, the drift toward more conciliatory behaviour on the French left.

A growing solidarity between the Communist and Socialist Parties favours the attenuation of conflict among competing labour organisations. In France this means that the already visible trend towards more plant-level co-ordination among competing trade unions should be further strengthened. Having returned recently from Renault's Billancourt works in Paris, I was able to observe the encouraging impetus toward grass-roots co-ordination at first hand. Interviews revealed that the overwelming majority of rank-and-file workers, whether affiliated with the largely

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Communist CGT or the Catholic but equally militant CFDT, strongly desired to see even more common actions undertaken by their respective organisations—and not only at Renault but throughout France. In addition, most of the workers with whom I spoke exhibited a clear understanding of the degree to which a divided labour movement weakens the working class by its internal cleavages. Again, this is not meant to imply that all differences between the CGT and the CFDT have vanished; their recent disagreement over the issue of unionisation in the military is a case in point.

In mid-January, after airing certain disagreements with one another, both Mr Séguy and Mr Maire, the national secretaries of the CGT and the CFDT, declared in almost identical terms that 'in the end, unity would certainly triumph.' For the first time in many years, a guarded optimism that such statements might have a basis in fact appears warranted.

THOMAS W. KIRKWOOD
Denver
Colorado

Royal Ulster Constabulary

IN THE VERY interesting article by John Platts Mills (*LM*, April 1976) it is stated that Robert Peel in 1829 came 'fresh from establishing the Royal Ulster Constabulary.'

No doubt the latter name is a 'slip of the tongue'? The force established by Peel in Ireland was the 'Royal Irish Constabulary'—a heavily armed force which was to 'save' large costs which might have been incurred if military forces (British) had had to be kept in Ireland at the 'required strength'.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (also heavily armed and added to by armed 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Specials, paid for by successive British governments till 1925) was set up after 1920, when Ireland was partitioned.

In the Free State (the other part of Ireland and now known as the Irish Republic) a 'Civil Guard' (Garda Sochrana), in the French tradition, was set up. It was and is an unarmed force in the main.

In the colonies of the former British empire, the police forces were usually armed. In the home of the empire this was not so. 'Liberal England' created the setting for the police: they were 'servants' of the public. But 'times are a-changing', and the latter myth wears thin indeed.

BETTY SINCLAIR
Belfast

BOOKS

The French Resistance
Frida Knight
Lawrence & Wishart, 238 pp, £5.50

THIS BOOK is doubly valuable for anyone concerned to understand the history of modern times. First, it is the only thorough study in English of one of the greatest pages in the annals of contemporary Europe, written moreover from the standpoint of class struggle. Secondly, its author herself lived through the resistance—first in Paris under the Nazis, then in their concentration camp for women at Vittel, and finally—after a daring escape—being passed from group to group of the resisting people of 'Vichy' France before getting back home to work in de Gaulle's headquarters (following a memorable article in the *Daily Telegraph*!).

The story it tells, stage by stage (from 1934 to 1939 more briefly, but with sharp political analysis which prepares the reader for wartime events) is a thrilling one. Nor is her account one only of personal experiences.

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Throughout she manages to set them against the great events in international politics—notably the struggles of the French national leader de Gaulle to free himself from the sinister domination of his British and American 'allies'. and those of the working class resistance movement (the biggest launched by the French Communist Party—the FFI—to overcome the sabotage of its effort by *both* de Gaulle and the 'Anglo-Saxon' politicians, Churchill and Roosevelt.

There are some slips. André Simone was not French, but a devoted Czech Communist (p 24). Soviet troops in 1939 re-entered not Bessarabia but the territories of Ukraine and Belorussia annexed by the Polish reactionaries in 1920 (p 30). The newspaper *Oeuvre* was the sheet, not of the Socialist Blum, but of the Radical-Socialists (p 53). Britain did not recognise de Gaulle's Committee as the *de jure* government of France in the winter of 1941 (p 79), and had not done so even as late as August 1943.

More surprising, in her six pages of references to the Spanish war and its international repercussions, the author says nothing of the massive material aid which the Spanish Republic received from the USSR—or, when writing of Chamberlain's and Daladier's betrayal of Czechoslovakia to Hitler at Munich, of the repeated Soviet offers (of which the French government was made aware) to fight with the Czechs even if their Western friends ratted. And she writes (p 218) as though the Soviet Union could have helped the French Communists to seize power in 1944 in the teeth of huge British and United States armies, and even that it 'sacrified' the Greek armed resistance movement to Churchchill's aggression that year—when obviously the USSR would otherwise have had to go to war with its British and American allies, who had lost less than a million dead between them, all told, against its (the USSR's) twenty million (and devastated economy)!

Such concessions to latter-day prejudice are an irrelevant excrescence on a well-told and moving story. The French resistance, at one end of Europe, was fighting the same battles as the Red Army at the other—and against the same political difficulties imposed by its allies.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears
Hilda Bernstein
International Defence and Aid Fund, 72 pp, 50p

CERTAINLY the system of apartheid has met with universal condemnation. However, Hilda Bernstein's book gives such an authoritative, detailed account of just what apartheid means for the black majority in South Africa, that it has made me appreciate and understand its full enormity more deeply than before.

The apparatus and regulations of apartheid are of such elaboration and intricacy that anyone and everyone can be trapped by them. Thousands are arrested, imprisoned, evicted from their homes, and family life completely destroyed.

In any society based on exploitation it is the women who suffer the worst. Here is how G. F. van L. Froneman, one of South Africa's legislators, regards women: 'This African labour force must not be burdened with superfluous appendages such as wives, children and dependants who could not provide service.' And truly enough, the wives, with the other superfluous appendages, are bundled off to their villages and to the 'reserve areas' where they find practically no means of existence.

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Employment for women in the towns is predominantly in domestic service, but to quote Mr Froneman again: 'There are single African women who could be usefully employed in the white area, and, while there are white families who could not do without domestic help, the moment a Bantu woman starts a family, then she belongs to her homeland,' and back she must go to what is often not her homeland at all, and the baby must grow up without a father.

Since oppression arouses resistance, it is no surprise that many of South Africa's women are heroically fighting the oppression which devastates their lives. The brief biographies in the book of some of these women tell us of the penalties they suffer in their fight for justice.

The widest possible circulation of this book would, I am sure, lead to a strengthening of support for the struggle against the inhuman wickedness of the regime in South Africa.

HILDA VERNON

Classrooms of Resistance
Chris Searle
Writers & Readers Publishing Co-operative, 168 pp, 85p

'EVIL AND DANGEROUS . . . tendentious drivel' was the judgement of Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph*: 'emotionally strident', 'mindless sloganising', pronounced Geoffrey Summerfield in his review in the *Times Educational Supplement*. The hysterical voices of paranoid Black Paperites swelled to a crescendo in that establishment journal to confirm the impression that the author, Chris Searle, is a 'mind-twisting', 'ruthlessly cruel' teacher, whose aim is to produce 'a cosily unanimous chorus of brainwashed replicators' (Geoffrey Summerfield).

Even more sharply than the comprehensivisation debate, *Classrooms of Resistance* has revealed the ignorance and the viciousness of the bourgeois defenders of educational élitism and the *status quo*. I wonder whether any book reviewed in the *TES* has produced so many columns of mindless, true-blue invective? Columnists from Howarth (October 24, 1975), John Vaizey and Buckley (October 31, 1975), Aristides (November 19, 1975) and correspondents F. W. Edwards, J. T. Hyland and Fred Naylor were all given space to air their views on Searle's alleged 'stereotyping', 'permissiveness', 'disastrous sentimentality', and the 'suppression of the individual' by the (to them) anti-educational concepts of 'egalitarianism' and 'collective consciousness'.

One short letter was published at last taking Tom Howarth to task for his article, as 'both snidely unfunny and disgracefully unprofessional'. John Ashburton, the writer, spoke of Searle's ability to draw from the children in his charge 'a measure of sensitivity and expressiveness that is a credit to them and their teacher.'

Serious educationalists and teachers familiar with the difficulties presented to working class schoolchildren by a middle class ethic in the curriculum, and in teacher-pupil relationships, will not have much difficulty in deciding where they stand in this debate.

Where is the mind-twisting and the suppression of individual thought and feeling in the verse quoted by Searle in his dedication of the book to the basement writers?

> But love is more than a metaphor
> It is a sledge-hammer to break
> down doors.
> It is an axe to free the chained
> Free each other, work for each
> other, love each other
> Enough to feel each other's pain.
> (Tony Harcup)

To create among his pupils 'contact

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and empathy with the oppressed peoples of the world, whether in your own street or lands or oceans away': this is Searle's professed aim. How he achieves it while at the same time 'bringing the children towards literacy' —the responsibility of every teacher of language—is movingly and eloquently illuminated by the passages of writing, poetry, prose and drama, by the 11 to 13 year-olds whom he taught in Stepney, and whose work fills most of the book's 168 pages.

These are the children who came out on strike when their teacher was dismissed by the school managers for publishing their own poems in *Stepney Words* in 1971. *Classrooms of Resistance* is his tribute to 'their creativity, self-organisation and generosity, and to the massiveness of their future.'

Classrooms of Resistance is essential reading for every teacher who cares for his/her pupils of whatever age group. It is beautifully illustrated with many apt and poignant photographs and some clever line drawings by Alan Gilbey.

JANE KING

RESISTANCE IN GREECE

Marion Sarafi*

EVENTS of the 1940s—resistance, December 1944, and the civil war of 1947-49—are under reassessment, both in Greece and in Britain. The reasons are different but results converge. In Greece, the fall of the junta and its censorship has brought out unpublished memoirs and created a demand for resistance history. Here, the opening of official archives after 30 years has already produced two important books†. A fog of manufactured myth disperses and a more complicated but more convincing picture is appearing.

C. M. Woodhouse served with the Allied Military Mission in Greece from 1942 to 1944 and as its commander from November 1943. In 1945 he served as Second Secretary to the British Embassy in Athens and in March 1946 as Secretary-General to the Allied Mission for observing the Greek elections. He is a former Conservative MP for Oxford and has already provided one authoritative book on the same subject, *Apple of Discord*, published in 1948. His latest book, *The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949*, shows an advance in thinking, due perhaps to the junta experience when he proved a determined and valued critic of that regime.

Another recent book is a collection of papers delivered at the University of London School of Slavonic and East European Studies. The Greek section comprises papers by C. M. Woodhouse, Brigadier

* The writer married General Sarafis in 1952. General Sarafis was Commander-in-Chief of the Greek resistance army, ELAS.

† *The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949*, C. M. Woodhouse, Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 324 pp, £15. *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, edited by Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg, Macmillan, 308 pp, £8.50.

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Myers (first commander of the Allied Military Mission) and Richard Clogg (lecturer in Modern Greek History at London University), and a subsequent discussion.

Woodhouse shows that the EAM resistance movement, its army ELAS, and the Greek Communist Party (KKE) were 'genuinely seeking both a social and a national liberation.' Whilst they aimed—as any political movement must—at *winning* power (and Woodhouse confirms their claim that during the resistance 'the villages learned what power was'), they did not try to *seize* power but worked rather for a peaceful, constitutional evolution. Both the civil strife between resistance movements in winter 1943-44 and December 1944 itself were simply *ad hoc* reactions to the fluctuations of British policy.

In effect there were two contradictory British policies. That of Churchill and the Foreign Office was for total support for the unconditional restoration of the monarchy. I well remember my own dismay when this was announced at Quebec in August 1943. The strife of 1943-44 between EAM-ELAS and the British-sponsored and somewhat ambivalent EDES was a direct reaction to the King's subsequent refusal to accept a referendum. At the same time, the military strategy of HQ Middle East required a build-up of ELAS as the only force effective against the enemy. This opposite policy prevailed briefly during summer 1943 but was still alive enough a year later to give General Sarafis the backing he needed for his minority advocacy of a tougher EAM line at the Lebanon conference with the Greek government.

Victory for the Foreign Office policy was crowned by the definition of spheres of interest between the great powers at the Moscow conference in October 1944. This was to turn Greece into a virtual British protectorate until 1947, when the US took over with the junta as a final result. Peaceful evolution was no longer a possibility.

But during the whole liberation period EAM continued to make concessions. The clashes of December 1944 with the Greek government and the British came about only when—as Woodhouse acutely remarks—both sides had persuaded themselves that the other was about to use force.

Ambassador Leeper's memoirs would seem to give some justification for EAM's fears*. Reaction was desperate and unco-ordinated, the efficient mountain ELAS being diverted to deal with EDES whilst the fighting in Athens was left to what we would now call urban guerrillas.

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* *When Greek Meets Greek*, R. Leeper, Chatto & Windus, 1950, p 93.

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For the civil war of 1947-49, Woodhouse shows how failure to apply the Varkiza Agreement, which had ended the December fighting, and a growing government-tolerated 'White terror', drove many former resistance men back to the mountains; meanwhile the now generally acknowledged mistake of EAM and KKE abstention in the 1946 elections proved the trigger. General Sarafis in fact warned the KKE General Secretary Zachariadis that abstention was the road to civil war. Woodhouse disposes of the myth of instigation from Eastern Europe, reports the government's appalling record of executions, and reserves judgement on the controversial issue of the 'kidnapped' or 'evacuated' children.

Besides some questionable issues of interpretation, there are four topics which do require comment. One is the trade union issue, where Woodhouse is the only authority I know to give this its due importance. Another is the Macedonian problem which runs like a tangled thread through his whole account and which is better explicated here than anywhere else. I would ask just two questions for the curious light they shed. Why was there a British sub-consulate at Florina near the Yugoslav Macedonian border? And why was it abruptly closed in December 1946, just before the arrival of the UN Special Committee on the Balkans?*

We still lack details on the work of the post-liberation British Military Mission in purging the Greek Officer Corps of all resistance or even mildly leftist elements. This process, continued and developed by the US, undoubtedly helped lay the foundations for the junta *coup*.

Due weight must also be given to the system of extorting humiliating recantations by torture, initiated by the sub-fascist Metaxas dictatorship of 1936-40 and monstrously amplified in the Makronisos concentration camp in 1948-50. The resulting psychological damage has ruined countless lives and has produced much secondary violence and misery. General Sarafis was categorical on the importance of this, and said that every case of excessive violence which he had to deal with by ELAS court-martial had a background of torture and recantation.

The trials of the junta's torturers last year brought into the open something which most of us knew about, and stimulated a public demand for legislation against torture with which we must hope the government will comply. The demand itself is indicative of a climate in which the 1947-49 civil war is no longer the 'bandit war' but has become the 'ideological war', just as Woodhouse describes it.

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* *Hansard*, January 29, 1947.

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'GENERAL' MONEY

LAST July, *Labour Monthly*'s Business Committee had the task of assessing whether the increase in the journal's price could be held to 5p, and at what stage the price would need to be reconsidered. The Committee decided to keep the increase low, but foresaw that this might mean a further increase after nine or ten, rather than twelve, months.

They took into account those items of expenditure over which we have no control, including purchases of paper, printers' charges and the all-important postage.

Readers will have noted the exceptionally good support we have received during the year from trade union and other labour movement organisations who have advertised greetings and announcements in our pages; individual supporters have also responded to our appeals for contributions to our fund.

We now face the most difficult months of the year. The first signs have been advance warnings of further rises in costs in all the three items listed above. Secondly, our fund total for the month of April, which we show below, is tragically low.

These are the facts facing our Business Committee. Obviously they will want to delay any increase in price for as long as possible, and they welcome every effort on the part of readers to assist by making suggestions for raising our sales, raising the level of fund contributions and promoting advertising.

A reader in Cornwall offers a useful historical reference. 'The seventeenth-century Austrian General Montecuculi, when asked which were the three things most necessary for success in war, is said to have replied: "The first is money, the second is money and the third is money." This observation also holds good in other fields. . . .'

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Nicola Seyd

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